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INFORMATION REPORT

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This analysis of the current Soviet political scene was prepared prior to the announcement on 8 February 1955 that Malenkov had resigned as Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

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- Recent speeches by Nikita S. Khrushchev and the fact that he has taken the liberty to sign decrees in his name as Secretary of the Communist Party strongly indicate that he has replaced G. M. Malenkov as top man within the collective leadership. Because so great an emphasis has been placed on Khrushchev's activities and position in the press, Malenkov will be unable to prevent this change from becoming permanent.
- It is unusual for a Secretary of the Central Committee to sign in his name, as Khrushchev did, decrees such as that on the more modified stand of the Party toward religion (Pravda, 11 November 1954) and that on establishing 22 April, Lenin's birthday, as an official holiday (Pravda, 11 January 1955). This was rarely done, even by Stalin himself. Such acts themselves were enough to indicate that Khrushchev had put himself up "as pretender" to the top position within the collective leadership. Although there has been a switch involving Malenkov and Khrushchev, the idea of collective leadership will be maintained. The slogan now appearing in the Soviet press, "the great unity of the Communist Party and the Government", will continue in its overabundant usage. Khrushchev, in support of this slogan and in an attempt to convince the people that the Party and the Government are united, makes a point of appearing in public with Malenkov and will appear with him in the future.
- A further indication of Khrushchev's occupancy of the number one position was his attitude during his speech to the Komsomol on 7 January 1955 toward Malenkov, who was seated beside him. Midway in his speech, Khrushchev mentioned the bachelors' tax law, stating that it was a good law and that he had suggested it to Stalin. Khrushchev then turned and pointed to Malenkov, saying that, if the

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people didn't believe that it was his idea, they should ask Malenkov. This was an act which attempted to relegate Malenkov to an inferior position. Stalin made a similar gesture at a meeting of the electors in Moscow in 1937. During his address, Stalin stated that he had not wished to put himself in front of the electors, but that Khrushchev had forced him to come up before them.

4. In this same speech to the Komsomol, Khrushchev used phrasing and expressions that had been part of Stalin's repertoire of Communist jargon. In the past this jargon had appeared in Malenkov's speeches but not in Khrushchev's. The use of Stalinisms in speeches, the linking together of Lenin, Stalin, and the Central Committee are being used by Khrushchev not only to help transfer power to himself, but also to cloak himself in the aura of Stalin—to show to the peoples of the Caucasus that in actuality they are not under the heel of Great Russians but are governed by persons who are not different from Stalin. When Stalin died and shortly thereafter Beriya was purged, the people of the Caucasus may have become afraid that they would fall under the rule of persons who evinced less concern over the welfare of these republics than had their predecessors. Khrushchev may hope to show that his rule will be a continuation of Stalin's and thereby quiet their fears.
5. Khrushchev will definitely benefit from any decrees that he signs which are considered to be beneficial. His esteem in the eyes of the people will be raised by his lenient attitude toward the Church and by his authorship of the tax law on bachelors, a minority who the people feel should be taxed. He now seems to be playing on themes which he knows will be popular with the people and will attempt to show how his attitudes are the attitudes held by Stalin, even by Lenin, and now by the Central Committee. For example, the Lenin birthday decree was issued to remind the people what a great man Lenin was. This holiday and the few days preceding it will bring forth considerable quantities of propaganda in an attempt to strengthen the idea of Communism and at the same time the authority of the Party. This will not be done because Khrushchev loved dictatorship under Stalin, but because it was necessary to return to the authority of Stalin in order to strengthen the position of the present Government.
6. It was quite normal that the Soviets should make every attempt to collect and destroy the January 15 issue of the Weiner Kurier, in which it was stated that there was a struggle going on within the collective leadership to determine who would be first. The Soviets would want to prevent the truth, as expressed in this article, from falling into the hands of Soviet citizens abroad. Even though the change in leadership is true, this would not be published at a time when the Government and Party were attempting to present a united front in order to gain approval and thence added and much needed authority. No open deviation from the idea of collective leadership can be afforded at this time. There is, however, an inconsistency, inasmuch as published materials within the Soviet Union have already given sufficient evidence of change. For example, Kaganovich's speech to the railway workers in May 1954, in which Khrushchev's name was mentioned before Malenkov's, is an indication that its author was already aware of a change in the precious balance of collective leadership. Anyone who had been in Moscow during the past few months would interpret the news distributed there, which was climaxed by the Party Secretary's signing of the Lenin birthday decree, as leading to the irrevocable conclusion that Malenkov had been moved into second place. About 30 percent of the people would be able to catch some idea of a struggle from the speeches, but the rest would not make this distinction.
7. Listings of the leaders of the Government had had significance under Stalin and even until the time of Beriya's purge could be utilized as an indicator of relative standing. However, this was not true from the time of Beriya's purge to the advent of alphabetical listings in July 1954. The shift to alphabetical listing may have been made because the members of the Presidium tired of the attention such listings were attracting in the Western press, and because it detracted from the idea of a collective form of leadership.
8. The extensive travels of Khrushchev to Poland, Kazakhstan, Czechoslovakia, China, the Soviet Far East, and Uzbekistan during 1954 were significant from a propaganda point of view as an attempt to put him close to the people. In addition, there is

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the possibility that the trips were also used to give Khrushchev a chance to establish contact with the more important Party officials in these areas. The attention given to Czechoslovakia is natural when it is taken into consideration that the Soviets feel this to be the weakest link in the satellite group. The Soviet leaders have little confidence in the present Government of Czechoslovakia.

9. The recent switch of emphasis from light to heavy industry is not as significant an indication of the extent of change in leadership as it is a statement of the lack of success achieved in attempting to raise the standard of living and increase production of consumer goods. The Soviets are inadvertently admitting, to the informed observer, that they have been completely unsuccessful in fulfilling the goals set for light industry. Now, with this realization, every effort is being made to take attention away from this failure by publicly turning all efforts to heavy industry. The propaganda wedge used to facilitate this cover-up is the repeated statement that now, with the rearming of West Germany, the capitalist world is showing its true intent--war; the Government and the people must now prepare to meet this threat. Real efforts to produce consumer goods will not lessen in any way; the spotlight will only be switched to heavy industry and all critics of this program, who might indicate that the light industry program was a failure, will be heavily rebuted. In actuality, no switch in final production goals will occur.
  10. Khrushchev, with the aide of his assistants who have been pushing his rise and thereby hoping to increase their own prestige and position, has arrived at a point where it will be extremely difficult for Malenkov to displace him. At this juncture Malenkov will not attempt to counterattack. The affair has gone too far and Malenkov cannot initiate any move which would undo it. In all probability there are known blemishes in Malenkov's record which have prevented him from opposing his removal from the top position within the collective leadership. At the time of Beriya's removal, there was an indication that Beriya had a file of compromising material on members of the Politburo, and on one member in particular. It was never stated who this one member was. Since Malenkov is not from a proletarian background, very possibly this file may have pertained to him. However, Malenkov probably has this file now. In addition, it may be considered that Malenkov, as the true servant of Stalin and as the executor of the Leningrad affair, at Stalin's request, will now, in the eyes of the Party workers, be thought to have mismanaged many things under Stalin. The Party workers will be only too quick to adjust to, or create, this type of thinking. Malenkov was definitely playing the leading role until he requested that he be dropped from the Secretariat in March 1953. Why he was forced to do so is not known but the reason for his doing so is the key to his decline. Malenkov will not struggle to prevent his demotion from becoming permanent.
  11. The status of other leading Government officials is as follows: Molotov no longer has a position of any strength within the collective leadership; Voroshilov is old and dying; Bulganin in all probability has joined in common cause with Khrushchev; and, lastly, Kaganovich is resigned to second place and knows that he cannot ever be first.
1. Comment: [redacted] has subsequently indicated that it is possible that Malenkov's opponents have possession of this file.

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